*All Quiet on the Western Front* byErich Maria Remarque

Section: Pages 100-186

The Second Company heads to the front once again to fight. The war has put a damper on the usually energetic optimistic men of the Second Company. The men are depressed, hungry, and fighting the English and French as well as giant thieving rats. Many of them men are unable to sleep due to shells landing small distances away. The Second Company knows an attack is eminent and that strikes fear into the hearts of the Second Company. During the English attack the Second Company is put in utter chaos and confusion leaving many soldiers dead or injured. Even Himelstoss is seen quivering inside of a dugout with the though of death quickly chasing behind him. The narrator and other experience soldiers try to keep the soldiers calm and show them how to react to the attacks of the enemy, but once the shells are drops and the guns thunder the Second Company goes right back into a chaotic state. Once the attacks cease the Second Company is relieved from the action. A head count is then taken and of the one hundred and fifty men that battled on the front only thirty-two men were left walking back to camp. The narrator and the thirty-one other men return to camp to a warming welcoming by Himelstoss and good food. The narrator gets a seventeen day leave and returns home to see his family. The narrator’s return is not exactly what he expected. He finds that his mom is suffering from cancer and must lie to her about harshness of the war. The war has and the news of his mother’s cancer has caused him to become depressed.

Analysis:

In this section of the book, the war had placed a huge effect on the men. The Second Company’s sprits were weakened and fear had enveloped them. The narrator and his friends watched as members of their unit were killed in the war on the front. Himelstoss, who seems like a fearless leader was balled up in dugout waiting for death to take him. The war has turned for the worse the Germans and many of soldiers understood, causing chaos in the ranks. The narrator seems to be able to distance himself from the war and the horrific images of war he experienced. He returns home temporarily only to find out that his mother is very sick due to cancer. He is also forced to lie to his mother about the war, and describe it in a way that makes it seem less devastating. While home, Paul is once again forced to lie to the mother of a fallen friend.

Application:

Death has now made its presence known in the novel. The mentality of the character has changed. I believe that characters are beginning to realize that death is enviable. Corporal Himelstoss thinks that he will die in the war so he lay out in the front shocked by all of chaos surrounding him. The narrator allows tries to evade death by teaching the recruits on how to properly respond when engaged by the enemy, but the recruits panic and many end up losing their lives. Along with the death of the recruits the narrator has lost two of his close friends. Death follows the narrator home when he finds out that his mother is very ill from cancer. At this point the narrator realizes that he cannot escape death.